

# Genesis 32:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed: and he divided the people that was with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands;

## Analysis

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**Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed: and he divided the people that was with him, and the f...** This passage belongs to the Jacob narratives which demonstrate God's sovereign election overriding human merit and the transformation of a deceiver into Israel, the father of the twelve tribes. The Jacob cycle shows how divine purposes advance through flawed individuals whom God graciously transforms.

Key themes include God's sovereign choice ("the older shall serve the younger"), the consequences of deception and family dysfunction, exile and return patterns, wrestling with God leading to blessing, and covenant renewal across generations. Jacob's character development from manipulative deceiver to mature patriarch demonstrates sanctification's lifelong process.

Theologically significant aspects include:

1. divine election based on grace not merit (Romans 9:10-13)
2. God's faithfulness to covenant promises despite human unfaithfulness
3. discipline as evidence of divine love and means of transformation
4. generational patterns of sin requiring divine intervention to break
5. prayer and wrestling with God as legitimate expressions of faith.

Jacob's limp after wrestling God symbolizes how divine encounters leave permanent marks, transforming our approach to life and dependence on God rather than our own cunning.

## Historical Context

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The patriarchal narratives (Genesis 12-50) reflect the cultural, social, and legal customs of the ancient Near East during the Middle Bronze Age (2000-1500 BCE). Archaeological discoveries including the Mari tablets, Nuzi tablets, and Egyptian records confirm many details: nomadic pastoralism, covenant-making ceremonies, marriage customs, property laws, and international travel patterns described in Genesis.

The cultural practices reflected include: treaty/covenant forms (Genesis 15), bride-price customs (Genesis 24, 29), inheritance laws favoring firstborn sons (Genesis 25, 27), adoption practices (Genesis 15, 30), levirate-type arrangements (Genesis 38), and Egyptian administrative systems (Genesis 41, 47). These parallels confirm Genesis's historical reliability while showing how God worked within ancient cultural frameworks to accomplish His purposes.

For later Israelites, these narratives established their identity as Abraham's descendants, explained their claim to Canaan, justified their possession of Joseph's bones (Exodus 13:19), and provided models of faith despite imperfection. The patriarchs' failures and God's faithfulness encouraged Israel that covenant relationship depended on God's grace rather than human merit. The movement from Mesopotamia to Canaan to Egypt set the stage for the Exodus and conquest narratives.

## Related Passages

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**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

**Psalms 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

## Study Questions

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1. What theological truths about Jacob Prepares to Meet Esau emerge from this passage?
2. How does this passage challenge modern cultural assumptions about identity, purpose, or morality?
3. How does understanding Christ as the ultimate fulfillment illuminate this passage's meaning?

## Interlinear Text

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|                |                                  |                |            |        |         |        |           |
|----------------|----------------------------------|----------------|------------|--------|---------|--------|-----------|
| אֵת            | וַיְחַץ                          | לֹ             | וַיֵּצֵר   | מְאֹד  | יַעֲקֹב | בְּ    | וַיִּירָא |
| H853           | H2673                            | H0             | H3334      | H3966  | H3290   |        | H3372     |
| and he divided | and distressed                   | was greatly    | Then Jacob | afraid |         |        |           |
|                |                                  |                |            |        |         |        |           |
| הַבָּקָר       | וְאֵת                            | הַצֹּאן        | וְאֵת      | אֵת    | וְאֵת   | אֲשֶׁר | הָעָם     |
| H1241          | H853                             | H6629          | H853       | H854   | H834    |        | H5971     |
| and herds      | that was with him and the flocks | the people     |            |        |         |        |           |
|                |                                  |                |            |        |         |        |           |
| מִחֲנוֹתַי     | לִשְׁנֵי                         | וְהַגְּמֵלִים  |            |        |         |        |           |
| H4264          | H8147                            | H1581          |            |        |         |        |           |
| bands          | into two                         | and the camels |            |        |         |        |           |

## Additional Cross-References

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**Genesis 35:3** (Parallel theme): And let us arise, and go up to Beth-el; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went.

**Isaiah 28:26** (Parallel theme): For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him.

**Acts 14:22** (Parallel theme): Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

**Psalms 142:4** (Parallel theme): I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul.

**Psalms 107:6** (Parallel theme): Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses.

**Psalms 61:2** (Parallel theme): From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

**Psalms 31:13** (Parallel theme): For I have heard the slander of many: fear was on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life.

**Proverbs 2:11** (Parallel theme): Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee:

**Exodus 14:10** (Parallel theme): And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the LORD.

**Matthew 8:26** (Parallel theme): And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.